

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-06

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN/N:GAGOWEN:RP

APPROVED BY ARA:HWSHLAUDEMAN

ARA:HARYAN (DRAFT)

ARA/CEN:MWEISSMAN (DRAFT)

PM/SAS:RSLOTT (DRAFT)

ARA/PLC:SQUIGG (DRAFT)

DOD/OASD/ISA:TAUSTIN (INFO)

----- 084497

P R 310028Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 189779

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SHUM, PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: FMS TRANSACTIONS WITH GON

REFS: (A) MANAGUA 3548, (B) MILGP MSG DTG 191803Z JUL 76,

(C) MANAGUA 03342, (D) MILGP MSG DTG 072258Z JUL 76,

(E) STATE 153803, (F) STATE 149438

1. DEPARTMENT PREFERS TO DEFER FINAL APPROVAL OF FMS TRANSACTIONS DISCUSSED IN REFTELS. THIS DECISION APPLIES TO REQUEST FOR FMS CREDIT FINANCING TO COVER COMMERCIAL SALE OF 6,000 M-16'S, FMS CASH SALE OF 510 M-60 MACHINE GUNS, AND FMS CASH SALE OF AMMUNITION FOR BOTH WEAPONS.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD STRESS WITH GON THAT THESE TRANSACTIONS
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REMAIN UNDER CONSIDERATION BY DEPARTMENT AND DOD. AS

POINTED OUT IN REFTEL F, DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO APPROVE M-16 SALE. NO SUBSEQUENT DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO VETO THESE PARTICULAR ARMS TRANSFERS OR TO MODIFY BASIC, LONGSTANDING USG POLICY OF RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO REASONABLE GON REQUESTS FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT JUDGES THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP CAN BEST BE PRESERVED AND OUR COMMON INTERESTS CAN BEST BE SERVED BY DEFERRING CONSUMMATION OF THESE SALES FOR THE TIME BEING. DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THAT MOVING AHEAD WITH THESE CONTRACTS NOW WOULD NOT SERVE OUR BILATERAL INTERESTS VIS-A-VIS NICARAGUA OR THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE GON.

3. DEPARTMENT REMAINS, IN ANY CASE, RELUCTANT TO ENTER INTO ANY COMMITMENT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL 4,000 M-16'S, BEYOND 6,000 NOW UNDER DISCUSSION. GON RATIONALE FOR ACQUIRING 10,000 TOTAL, OUTLINED IN REFTEL C, VIEWED AS DUBIOUS BY ANALYSTS IN WASHINGTON AGENCIES. HONDURAN MENACE SEEMS TENUOUS WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST POTENTIAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN MAINTAINING SECURITY INDEFINITELY FOR 4,000 MODERN AND MUCH-SOUGHT-AFTER AUTOMATIC WEAPONS IN STORAGE. IN VIEW OF NATIONAL GUARD'S "WELL-KNOWN STRUCTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL" PROBLEMS, ACQUISITION OF SUCH A LARGE SURPLUS MIGHT WELL SERVE AS CHANNEL BY WHICH THESE WEAPONS COULD REACH FSLN AND OTHER UNINTENDED RECIPIENTS. KISSINGER

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